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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the kinds of child care arrangements parents can currently make for children under three years of age. Some of the essential features of these arrangements are discussed: continuity of care, safe environments, consistency in parent and caregiver child-rearing values, stimulation for the children, social play, and some mechanisms for parent control which have the approval of both the parent and caregiver. The advantages and disadvantages of eight types of child care arrangements are examined: (1) live-out caregiver, (2) live-in babysitter, (3) exchange babysitting, (4) neighborhood group day care, (5) work-based group care, (6) family day care, (7) playgroup, and (8) minicenters. Suggestions for reducing some of the disadvantages are offered. (SDH)

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THE INFANT DAY CARE DEBATE:

NOT WHETHER BUT HOW

by

Peggy Daly Pizzo

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"Children under the age of three don't belong in day care!" say some. "The benefits of day care for infants and toddlers should be available to all families" say others. There is currently much debate over the effects of day care on children under the age of three. But while the debate rages, more and more parents are using some sort of child care arrangement for their infants and toddlers.*

In this paper, it is not my intention to present the arguments pro and con infant day care. These arguments are well documented elsewhere.[2] Instead, I prefer to examine eight different kinds of child care arrangements parents currently can make for very young children: live-out caregiver, live-in caregiver, exchange babysitting, the neighborhood group day care center, industry or university based group day care center, formal family day care, informal family day care and the mini-center. I would like to highlight what I see as the advantages and disadvantages of each arrangement, especially looking at each arrangement as it relates to some of the important qualities that parents look for in infant day care. Let us begin with the latter.

What does one look for when making child care arrangements for children under three? How does one know when a place or a person is "right"? These are the kinds of questions that concern parents as they begin to search for good infant care arrangements. The recent manual, Day Care: Serving Infants, lists some of the important qualities to look for in infant day care: adequate nourishment, protection from disease, focused relationship with a small number of sensitive adults, including verbal interaction with an interested adult, etc.[3]

Much has been written about the importance of a warm, loving caregiver[4] who has had some experience and/or training in taking care of infants, knows what to expect from them and really cares about helping them develop. In this paper, I would like to consider some of the other necessary features of child care arrangements for children under three: (1)continuity of care; (2) safe environment; (3) sufficient consistency in the child-rearing values of both parent and caregiver; (4) an appropriate degree of stimulation for the child; (5) opportunities for social play with other children and (6) clear mechanisms for parent control which have the approval of both parent and caregiver.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

This means an infant or toddler is never (or rarely) cared for by an unfamiliar person in an unfamiliar environment. It means that child care arrangements remain stable over long periods of time and that changes in day care are "smoothed out" for the child by both parent and caregiver. Continuity of care is usually much sought after by parents. Very young children are

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*In March 1967, the number of mothers working full-time or part-time with children under the age of three was 2,205,000. By March 1973, this number had risen to 2,572,000 -- an increase of 367,000 children.[1]

still learning to trust and just beginning to work out a stable sense of self, chiefly by developing a deep reliance on a limited number of adults to whom they become very attached. Parents using child care arrangements also go through a process of developing trust in the caregivers of their children, and so the continuity of trusted caregivers is important to parents as well. But changes in child care arrangements are often necessary, especially since child care programs are so inadequately supported by the larger society. I have seen children under three weather several of these changes very well, but it should not be necessary.

SAFETY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Another key element in infant care arrangements is the safety of the environment. In my view, a safe environment for a child under three is one in which any avoidable cause of accidental injury has been discovered and eliminated. Safety is an urgent consideration for children under the age of three. Accidents are the leading cause of death for children, and motor vehicle accidents, burns, poisonings and falls are the accidents that occur most frequently in the one to four year old group.[5] Children are especially susceptible to accidents when a new person has just begun caring for them. A caregiver (until he or she has been caring for that child for quite a while) simply doesn't know the child, his climbing habits, what he can easily get into and what will stop him. Therefore, a day care environment really needs to be scrupulously child-proofed. An Accident Handbook, which has clear guidelines for making environments safe can be purchased for 35¢ from the Children's Hospital in Boston.[6] Parents could use this handbook as a basis for discussion with the caregiver about safety. The fear of leaving children unprotected in an unsafe environment is one of the most compelling anxieties that a parent has about day care. Child care programs could do much more to dispel this anxiety by clearly explaining the measures they have taken to protect the child's safety.

CONSISTENCY IN CHILD-REARING APPROACHES

Consistency is fairly critical, too. If the parent and caregiver share enough of the same ideas about raising children, they will be comfortable with each other and better able to communicate with each other and the child. Consistency in child-rearing values also helps protect the child from confusion. This need not be a rigid conformity between parent and caregiver on all details of bringing up children. Even toddlers can quickly adapt to a certain amount of difference in child-rearing practices. They rapidly understand, for example, that grandparents have different rules and expectations than parents! But if a caregiver is convinced that a child must be vigorously toilet-trained before the age of one or a parent feels that a child should be gently encouraged to use the pot after the age of two, everyone concerned is in for trouble.

It helps when parents and caregivers explain to each other their ideas about bringing up children -- before the child care arrangement is made. Each can suggest a few bypothetical situations to the other and ask what should be done in that situation. For example, "What do you believe is the best thing to do if a two year old is hitting another child? What's the best thing to do when a toddler refuses to eat? What's your opinion on picking up babies when they cry?" These sorts of questions can be asked to discover what consistencies exist in the child-rearing values of both parties -- not to assess whether each

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party has the "right" values. In a child care program where the caregivers are employees, parents could ask to see copies of job guidelines or job descriptions of the caregivers. Or parents could draw up samples of these job guidelines themselves,[7] using them as a basis of discussions with caregivers about how they view the job.

ADEQUATE STIMULATION

There has been a great deal of concern about the importance of intellectual stimulation in day care environments for this age. This anxiety probably stems from the research done on the harmful effects on children of sterile institutionalization, where children were deprived of opportunities to play with devoted adults, to explore attractive objects and to move about freely in an interesting environment.[8] Quality infant day care programs have reacted to these research findings by taking great precautions to provide adequate stimulation for the infants in their care -- a variety of interesting objects to examine and plenty of nourishing attention from an adult who enjoys playing with infants and toddlers.

But an equally essential feature for children under three is the avoidance of overstimulation -- too much handling, too much commotion, too many activities going on at once. Some infant day care programs, overreacting to the spectre of sterile hospitals, can create environments that just bulge with novelty, colors, sounds, textures, toys, displays -- too much for some infants, who need a gentler place. The pamphlet, "Do You Need Day Care?" which can be ordered from the Day Care and Child Development Council of America for $.25, lists some useful points to look for when assessing the degree of stimulation in a day care program for infants, and helpful information can also be gleaned from the aforementioned Day Care: Serving Infants. The most important thing, I think, is that the degree of stimulation match the individual child's need and capacity for stimulation and not some "optimal level" advocated by persons (like me) who write articles about child care for infants.

An often undervalued characteristic of a quality infant care arrangement is opportunity for social play with other children. I don't agree with the frequently voiced opinion that children under three don't begin to play with one another until the magic age of three. I've seen infants in group day care who playfully imitate one another and toddlers who play cooperatively with toddler friends to whom they are deeply and personally attached. Opportunities for social play in a child care arrangement doesn't have to mean the constant companionship of other infants and toddlers. It might mean joining other children in a nearby park or neighbor's home for a few hours a day. Or social play might take place between an infant and a fascinated five year old who spends long periods of time encouraging the baby's smiles and enjoyment of social contact. Child care arrangements, however, that completely isolate children under three from other children (which might, for example, happen when the infant is cared for by someone who comes into the home) deprive them of valuable experiences in learning to be a human, that is social, person.

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PARENTS MAINTAIN CONTROL

Finally, and most important, there is the control that parents exercise over the child care situation. Parents leaving infants and toddlers in day care often feel anxious and guilty, especially in this society, which continues to embrace (despite evidence to the contrary[9]) the notion that day care for children under three is "harmful." Even if quality day care for infants is later conclusively proved to be not at all harmful, infants and toddlers in day care may develop in undesirable ways, simply because parents are encouraged to feel guilty and anxious about their child care arrangements, and the chidren will "pick up" on all this worry. We may not know for sure exactly what is and what isn't harmful to the developing child, but we can be reasonably certain that raising a child in a climate of anxiety and guilt isn't going to do the child much good. Parent who use day care for their infants and toddlers need to protect themselves and to be protected from the easily provoked and excessive anxiety about infant day care rampant in our society, without dulling themselves into a passive, noncritical acceptance of any infant care arrangement that turns up.

This is why parent control of infant care arrangements is so important. If parents know and approve the kind of care and education their children receive, they will be freer to raise their children in a climate of positive feelings.

Although the importance of parent control is widely recognized, the reality of parent control is difficult to achieve. To my mind there are two issues that obstruct efforts of both parents and caregivers to establish parent control. One is the issue of trust; the other is the lack of theoretical models that grant both parents and caregivers significant roles in the child care situation.

Practically speaking, it is the issue of how much the parent trusts the caregiver that determines how positive the parent feels about the child care arrangement. In fact, I think the issue of parent control is such a difficult one to work out because both parent and caregiver assume that the parent should trust the caregiver. It would be more helpful if just the opposite were assumed: that parents have not only the right, but the obligation to withhold trust from a strange caregiver who has just begun caring for their child. Only when both parent and caregiver can interpret and accept the need for parental control as part of a parent's responsibilities will authentic parent control exist.

The other obstructive issue is the alienation that the words "parent control" cause when they are interpreted to mean that parents dictate to caregivers exactly what should be done, with total disregard for the caregiver's views or skills. In my experience that is a form of parent control which is rarely attempted. It is obvious that it just won't work out. Caregivers, stunted by this indifference to their perceptions, quit. Eventually the child care arrangement crumbles. Furthermore, very few parents in my experience want that kind of uneven relationship with caregivers. Often, however, we get trapped by the industrial employer-employee model of relationships between parents and caregivers. Another model, more appropriate to the child care situation, has recently been suggested: the designer-builder model. Parents are the designers, caregivers are the builders. I think this is a truer description of the relationship between parents and

caregivers. It shows that each has different but equally important areas of responsibility. Each has a role demanding creative skills. However, in order for the child care design to be the best one possible, and for it to be carried out with minimal difficulties, the builder (caregiver) is not just the servant of a parent-created design. Rather, the builder consults for the designer, offering ideas based on his/her intimate knowledge of the problems and strengths the design will present when it is put into operation. The designer/parents listen to this input with the careful respect that the knowledgeable builder/caregivers deserve. Although the parents, in view of their ultimate responsibility to the child, make the final decision, this model of parent control is diagrammed more as a cooperative circle than a chain of command.

Whatever form of parent control is finally chosen, it is important for the parent and the caregiver to agree on the degree of control the parent will have and the way in which the control will be exercised. Easier said than done, I know, but the kind of closeness that can develop between parent and caregiver once this agreement has been reached is enormously beneficial to the caregiver, to the child's whole family -- and to the development of the child herself.

Keeping in mind these six necessary features of child care arrangements for infants -- continuity, safety, consistency, stimulation, social play and parent control -- I will now look at the different kinds of child care arrangements mentioned above. Each arrangement has its advantages, and each has its disadvantages. I have deliberately included suggestions that I think will help reduce some of the disadvantages of the different arrangements. This has been done for program operators but also for parents who are or will be involved in the struggle for better infant day care.

LIVE-OUT CAREGIVER

A frequent arrangement made by parents for their infants is the live-out caregiver, often called simply "babysitter." Parents voice a preference for someone to come into their home, because they feel the infant or toddler can receive maximum individualized attention and that child care can continue even if the child is sick, so the parent doesn't have to lose time at work. This is a considerable asset for parents of infants and toddlers, who contract on the average of eight to ten infections (some of which can drag on for weeks) a year.[10] Parents also feel the advantage of leaving the child in a familiar environment that is especially designed and child-proofed for that child, with the degree of stimulation tailored to that child's individual needs. Some parents think the child will feel more secure staying in her own home. And this arrangement is definitely more convenient for the parent -- there is no packing up of clothes, no trip to the day care center. If the child needs to sleep a bit late, the parent can let him, without being late for work. Finally, some parents prefer this arrangement to day care outside the home because the role of the caregiver is clearly defined and parents feel they have more right to explain their wishes about the child's care and to expect that these wishes will be carried out.

To balance these advantages, however, there are some disadvantages. Chiefly, the parent can never be sure what is happening while she is away. There is no

supervision of the caregiver, no one for the caregiver to turn to for advice, or for the parent to depend on to insure that certain standards are always met. If a parent enploys the same caregiver for a long period of time, trust can build up between them, and the parent will feel more secure about predicting what goes on with her child all day. But continuity of care is quite difficult to establish with a live-out caregiver, because there's no guarantee how long the person will stay with the job. Unless one is able to pay the salary of a mature adult (sometimes as much as $3.00 an hour), it's very hard to find someone who will stay for more than a couple of months. There is a further disadvantage to this type of arrangement: Unless there are other preschool children at home during the day, there are usually no built-in provisions for playmates for the child. Finally, the burden of developing a good working relationship lies entirely with the parent and the caregiver. There is no third person to help with communication, and there are no widely accepted norms for the kinds of communication which should take place between them. So if, for example, a caregiver feels he/she should fully discuss the child's development with the parent and the parent feels this is too "private" to be discussed (or vice versa), there is no person or policy to call upon for support or direction.

Some of these disadvantages can be minimized by searching for an older woman or by advertising for a babysitter through an agency or educational institution requiring references, by interviewing applicants for the position very thoroughly. A guide for such an interview can be found in a free booklet, Selecting and Instructing Babysitters.[11] In asking for references, parents can ask specifically for names of persons for whom the applicant has already provided child care. Calling these former employers to discuss their perspectives on the applicant's child care skills can help the parent make a choice; but more importantly, if those perspectives are positive, they can provide an important first boost to the parents' developing trust in their new babysitter. Parents can also explain very carefully to applicants their ideas about child care, about relationships between parents and caregivers in this regard. Likely looking applicants can be asked to come and spend (with pay) a few mornings with parent and child. Arrangements can also be made for the caregiver to take the child regularly to the home of his friends or to nearby parks where friends play.

THE LIVE-IN "BABYSITTER"

This is especially feasible in a town where there are people willing to exchange child care work for room and board and perhaps a small salary -- e.g., a university town. It has the same advantages as the live-out caregiver, plus some. Because the caregiver lives in the same house and shares family life to some extent, both the parent and the child can get to know him/her more naturally and intimately, and it is easier for trust to develop. The parent also has ample opportunity to observe how the child and caregiver relate to one another and so to acquire a better idea of what happens during the day. Then too, with this arrangement, if the parent needs to go out in the evening, or to be away for a few days, the child care be left with someone very familiar.

The disadvantages to this arrangement are basically the same as the live-out caregiver: fewer insurances to quality and continuity of care, unsupported parent-caregiver relationships. In addition, there is the inconvenience of having a third adult always there. Many parents consider this a minor inconvenience , especially if they have plenty of living space or are the kind of

people who don't mind "close living." For the caregiver, too, this kind of close living can result in a feeling of being trapped -- a feeling which easily translates into resentment toward parent and child.

When the in-home caregiver is a skilled, reliable and supportive person, this child care arrangement can be superb. But trying to decide whether applicants have these qualities is a capricious venture. How does one know what to look for? How can one be sure? These are the questions that plague parents looking for "sitters." Moreover, the skilled in-home caregiver is very difficult to find. I've known parents who have spent months advertising for the right applicant. Four-C's and other coordinating agencies or community referral services could help by maintaining a job "clearinghouse" for in-home caregivers, so that parents could place one call to get the names of several applicants. It would help even more if the community referral service could do a preliminary screening of applicants -- perhaps an initial interview and checking of references. A guide for further mutual interviews of parents and caregivers, together with suggestions for developing good working relationships would also be helpful.

Finally, with the in-home caregiver arrangement the possibility for developing underlying competitive feelings between parent and caregiver is enhanced. Often the most ideal in-home caregiver is the mature woman whose own children are grown, who "misses having babies around" and prefers child care above any other job. This is the kind of person most likely to stay with the job and really give competent, loving care. However, a caregiver like this, who has had years of child care experience, is likely to feel that she knows more about raising children than the young parents of the child. And often, she really does know more. Sometimes, particularly if she stayed home with her own children when they were small and she is feeling a little sad over the "loss" of her own children to adolescence or adulthood, she is inclined to look upon the child she cares for as really "her" child. The vulnerability of the in-home caregiver arrangement to this kind of competition, however, can be offset by "screening out" in the interview process the applicant who never volunteers her own opinions, never asks for the parents' response to those opinions and never solicits parents' views on child-rearing. Parents can explain to caregivers (and then carry out) their cooperative approach to child care and their willingness to draw upon the skills of the caregiver. Caregivers in any child care situation can see themselves as playing a family-supportive role (rather than "substitute mothers"). They can use their skills and experience to buoy up the parents' sense of confidence in themselves and to "cement" the parents' attachment to their child. When this supportive perspective is adopted, the in-home caregiver, with the intimate knowledge of the family's strengths and needs derived from day to day contact has in my experience the greatest potential of any infant care arrangement for helping parents get started on a healthy and mutually satisfying relationship with their infant.

EXCHANGE BABYSITTING

A third arrangement, "exchange babysitting," when two neighbors take turns caring for each other's children, is obviously not feasible when parents work full-time. It is possible when parents are away only part-time. There are distinct advantages to this arrangement: It is free, and one can leave one's child in the care of other, familiar parents. Some parents feel much more secure because the caregiver is both familiar and a parent. Also, one can provide social play experiences for one's children by exchanging with a neighbor who has children in the same age range. Now, the disadvantages: It is usually an unstable arrangement as neighbors move or work schedules and child care needs change. Jealousy can be another problem. Toddlers especially can refuse to accept the idea that parents should care for other children; and although this simulation of sibling rivalry may ultimately benefit the child, some parents find it frazzling and eventually destructive of the "exchange."

Finally, with this arrangement, although most parents can influence, they cannot control what happens to the child during the day. Indeed, since this arrangement is usually a gesture of friendship between two neighbors, parents fear that voicing an objection will be contrued as personal criticism and may motivate the criticized neighbor to end the exchange. It helps if two friends begin with the "contract" to express complaints, ask probing questions about child-rearing beliefs, etc. and in general communicate honestly -- but this is difficult in practice. People in our society are deeply accustomed to thinking that the right to control the activities of another person is present only when money is exchanged.

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP DAY CARE CENTER

A child care arrangement for children under three that is finally emerging from the shadows is the neighborhood group day care center. It is also the kind of day care that is popularly considered the least suitable for infants and toddlers. Yet this arrangement has very distinct advantages, chiefly that it is more feasible to provide continuity of care, to design and maintain a safe environment, and it allowsfor greater parent control.

It would almost never happen that an infant in a group day care center would be suddenly left alone with a strange new person -- and this is a big advantage over the other kinds of child care arrangements. This continuity is insured because there are a number of adults caring for the children. The infant or toddler can become attached to, but exclusively dependent upon, one adult. If that adult is sick, goes on vacation, or has to leave the job, there are still other familiar adults surrounding the child, and the environment remains the same familiar situation.

With regard to safety, a day care center, unlike a home, can be especially designed or renovated with infants and toddlers in mind, so it is less likely to have the long flights of stairs or the easily accessible poisonous substances and sharp objects that one finds in homes.

The environment of the day care center, if it is of adequate size, can provide space and equipment for vigorous indoor play (riding tricycles, climbing, etc.) which is especially valuable for toddlers during bad weather months. Thirty-five square feet per child is the minimum space required. My personal feeling is that seventy square feet per child, distributed over several small

rooms or enclosed areas, will allow the toddler to discharge the energy that otherwise builds into agression and at the same time create feelings of intimate, warm space. One open room does not allow for the fact that children under three have widely different sleeping schedules -- some children will need to be sleeping while others are at play.

Obviously, group day care offers extensive opportunities for social play. Infants can observe each other for long periods of time, reach out and touch one another, explore similar objects together. Some of the most highly developed social play in infants that I've ever seen has taken place in group day care.

One other major or minor advantage to group day care, dependent on one's perspective: It is the child care arrangement most likely to attract male caregivers. Some parents feel that this is most important for children from fatherless homes, while other parents feel it is good for all children to see men taking care of little ones.

Finally, and to my mind the most important advantage of an infant day care center is that it can be designed (or redesigned) to allow for much parent control. A day care center is much more of an open, public environment than a home. This means that both the safety of the environment and the behavior of the caregiver are more open to the scrutiny of parents and community visitors who come to the center. The parent then doesn't feel as completely dependent on the good intentions or degree of expertise of the caregiver. The public eye is another insurance that the child will receive good care. This kind of "informal supervision" is especially likely to take place in a "tight" community, where neighbors know one another and the caregivers live in the community and associate with the parents on a neighborly basis. Parents in these communities feel pretty confident that <u>someone</u> will inform them if their child is neglected in any way. Obviously, this "informal supervision" can sometimes irritate parent-staff relations, but it can also be used to improve the quality of the care and offer parents a peace of mind that is more difficult to achieve in other child care arrangements.

The open environment of a day care center also allows parents (even in a center not controlled by parents) to come and observe what happens to children there. I would <u>strongly</u> discourage the use of any center which does not invite parent observation. Parents who come to observe may not see how the caregivers relate to <u>their</u> children, but the parent can see how children are treated in general and so get a better idea of how her child will be handled when she is away. The ideal situation for the parent is to have a "one-way" observation arrangement so the parent can observe the child without being seen -- a tremendous educational experience for parents. Caregivers sometimes feel that the one-way observation creates a fishbowl atmosphere for people working in the program, although this happens less in a program that adopts a cooperative model of parent control.

In addition to permitting parent observation, group day care has more visible and more straight-forward mechanisms for exercising parental influence than many other child care arrangements. Because the teacher is responsible to the director and the director to the board, the parent can find out who to go to and has several options available when she wants to make a suggestion or voice an objection -- and this can reduce the strain on the parent-caregiver relationship. Also, policies about child care tend to be articulated, perhaps

even printed in a pamphlet for parents, which makes it easier for the parent to initiate discussions, make comments, or ask questions about the care the child is receiving. Furthermore, the open environment of day care classrooms, compactly situated in one building, permit closer supervision of the caregivers, with the result that the director is more conversant with teaching styles, etc. and thus better able to discuss each child's day care experience with the parent.

Obviously, these advantages of parent control can be multiplied when the actual policies about child care are made by a board or committee controlled by elected representatives of the parents. When parents are responsible for making these decisions, both the process of "hashing out" together the goals of the program and how they can be achieved, and the final result, the actual policies which guide the daily decision-making at the center, help parents to feel not only that they can control what happens to their children in their absence, but also to feel more secure in making the daily difficult decisions about bringing up children. And it has been my experience that when the parents feel comfortable and sure that they are providing well for their children in their absence, the moments of separation can be positive ones, sources of strength and growth for both parent and child.

Continuity of care is a real advantage to group day care only if the infant care center is a fairly stable institution. So parents would do well to inquire how many years the center has been in operation, the source of funds, any current financial problems, approximately how long the teachers remain on the job, etc. Most parents, however, if they have the option of group day care at all, will have to make a decision on a new center with fairly uncertain sources of money -- possibly an unstable situation, but possibly not, especially if the parents using the center are determined to insure its survival.

Continuity of care is also disrupted if an infant care center bars entry to sick children, believing that the admission of even mildly sick children will spread infection and cause epidemics. There is some evidence that contests this belief, and proposals have been made for adding a medically staffed sick bay component to group day care that has been computed to add $2.36 a week to the cost of care.[12] Many people (and many working parents, too) are opposed to the idea that parents could leave sick children in day care centers. Naturally there can be no case made for accepting children in day care with highly contagious disease. But there are many less serious, less infectious illnesses. And many parents will lose their jobs if they miss too many days at work. Infants and toddlers especially (who have the highest frequency of minor illnesses) are also very disturbed by being in day care one week, at home the next, back in day care for a few weeks, etc. They like their routines maintained. I have seen infants and toddlers, who, if they are not uncomfortable, seem to enjoy being in day care with all their friends, watching the activity from a comfy corner or a cot, children who at home would probably be bored or cranky. So, although attitudes vary greatly among parents, the automatic exclusion of all sick children from infant day care can cause much hardship to some families and so constitutes one of the strongest disadvantages of group day care for infants.

Perhaps the chief reason why group care for infants has earned such a "bad image" is that if certain conditions aren't met, group day care can have a powerful negative impact on very young children. A most critical condition is the ratio of caring adults to children. If, for example, there

are more than four infants to a caregiver, the child can get "lost in the crowd." Even with an adult-child ratio of one to four, the best infant group care centers further protect the child by "attachment grouping" -- they assign four children (usually on the basis of mutual liking for one another) to each adult and expect that adult to be chiefly responsible for the care of these four children. This gives the child an "emotional anchor" in the room while allowing him to make attachments to other caregivers also. It permits the caregiver to be closely involved in the development of all four children, rather than just superficially involved in the development of all the children. And it encourages greater accountability to the parent. The parent knows who to go to when she wishes to exchange information or explain a problem that specifically affects her child. The caregivers know that they will only have to describe to four parents the child's day in the center, and this permits closer observation of the children and more personal teacher-parent relationships to develop.

The bad effects of group care for infants will be felt if the space in the center is very small and sterile, with few toys, bright colors or happy faces. Babies need to be handled and talked to; they need different things to look at and touch. Without these, their developing intelligence, even their total bodily well-being, is endangered. However, another danger inherent in group care is overstimulation -- just the opposite of what most people expect from group day care. There can be too much activity, too much noise, too frequent interaction with too many other children. Small babies are capable of simply falling asleep when this happens. But older babies and toddlers don't have this protective device. I think a child (especially a child who becomes quickly fatigued or irritable when there is too much stimulation) can develop habits of "screeing out stimuli" which can turn into antisocial habits -- fussing, withdrawal, fixation on toys, etc. This possibility of overstimulation increases if the center opeates on the theory that "if one educational toy helps a child develop then fifty educational toys are even better." Middle class centers, like middle class homes, are especially susceptible to this philosophy. Many children (especially from one-child families) do find the stimulation a bit overwhelming at first and then simply adapt to it and enjoy it, so parent and teachers do need to take some time before concluding that a child is being overstimulated. And day care centers can protect the child by providing places where the child can be alone -- an extra "guest room" or enclosed corner, a playhouse or even cardboard boxes.

It is also undesirable if infants and three to five year olds are cared for together in the same space. Simply by nature of their vigorous play with one another, groups of five year olds can be downright dangerous to infants, who should be cared for in a separate space. Interaction with older children, as difficult as it is to achieve in group day care, is beneficial to infants. But, when older preschoolers are being cared for nearby, it is more desirable to arrange for one to two of the "big kids" to take turns acting as helpers in the infant space.

If there are just too many children in a center, it can be a bad environment for infants. The larger the center, the more difficult it is to administer. This creates staff tensions and a tenser atmosphere all around. Some people consider the ideal size for a day care center for three to five year olds to be thirty to forty children.[13] I think an infant day care center should be

no larger than twenty children. Day Care has many operational difficulties, and a conscientious day care director is thoroughly wearied by the responsibility she carries for the quality care of not one but twenty infants. My observations have led me to believe that the average stay for a program director is two, maybe three years. Many day care directors leave after one year. I think day care directors would stay with the job longer and provide better care if day care centers were smaller and more manageable.

One other disadvantage to group care is that some day care centers are inclined to really ignore the nutritional needs of children in the interests of economy or "efficiency." This can happen in any child care arrangement, but the temptation is stronger in group care, where there are large numbers of children to prepare food for. Some centers succumb to the temptation and cater in or cook cheap, quickly prepared canned foods which are often very high in starchy carbohydrates and very low in protein -- the creamed "chicken" on toast, spaghetti with infinitely teeny "meatballs" type of menu. As nutritional research is beginning to demonstrate the relationships of not only good health but developing intelligence to the inadequate nutrition in a very young child's diet,[14] day care centers, especially those that care for children under three, do a great disservice to the children in their care if they use these starchy foods.

Finally, the foremost disadvantage of the infant care center will always be the cost: $50 to $60 per week per child in 1973, at least in urban centers. According to a Massachusetts survey, few parents are prepared to pay more than $20 a week per child,[15] which leaves a substantial amount that would have to be subsidized by private and/or government sources. We have seen how "eager" these sources are to pay for infant day care, so it will be a long time, I fear, before group day care for infants will be a realistic option for most people.

Parents do need to be well informed when they are in the process of selecting or creating an infant care center. Group care for infants is like the proverbial girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead -- when it is good, it's terrific; and when it's bad, it's just awful. There are pamphlets which parents can use to help them evaluate an infant care center.[16] That, in my opinion, is what we should do with the infant day care center -- evaluate it critically, not just write it off. We need to look carefully at the potential that group infant care has for offering stable, safe and parent-controlled care of a very high quality.

WORK-BASED GROUP CARE

In descriptions of group day care for infants, one often sees recommended that the day care center be established at the parent's place of work or study. The advantage most often attributed to this particular child care arrangement is that the parent can visit the child several times during the course of the day, the mother can nurse her baby, etc. This may be a distinct advantage for nursing infants and older children, but once an infant has begun to experience separation anxiety, frequent daily visits by the parents may be more painful than anything else. It is painful for toddlers to know that the parent is nearby but still inaccessible. For children who have not mastered the process of separation, there are few benefits to this arrangement. Some parents do prefer to have infants close by, not because they intend to visit them frequently, but because they feel more secure knowing that if

anything should happen to the child, the parent could be there in a few minutes. The other advantage to this arrangement is that work-related day care is more likely to adapt to a parent's "unusual" work schedule than a neighborhood center -- a hospital day care center might arrange its schedule around nursing shift requirements, etc. However, a possible disadvantage to this arrangement is distance from home to center. If the distance is far, and especially if parents have to use public transportation, many parents are reluctant to use work-based day care.[17] Highly understandable, especially when you consider that the transportation would have to be utilized during rush hours.

FAMILY DAY CARE

While group day care for infants meets with disfavor, one reads continually that family day care is the preferable child care arrangement. Like any other child care situation, however, family day care has both advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of family day care stem from its home environment and its small group of children. Both features provide a unique stimulus to intellectual, emotional and social development in very young children. Both features promote a special, intimate relationship between parent and caregiver.

The home environment, in its internal design, its relations with the outside world, and its casual "curriculum," has much to offer. Homes are powerful learning centers for children under three. Even the most austere homes will usually have a variety of objects for infants to look at. Homes also have educational "equipment" with special appeal to toddlers -- cupboards that open and close, couches to climb on, chairs to hide behind and play "house" or "train" with, the versatile pots and pans, etc. In addition to these open-ended creative play materials, the physical layout and the casualness of the home really lend themselves to the free play so valued by early childhood educators. It is perfectly commonplace, for example, to find some children in a day care home playing with water in the kitchen, while others look at books in the living room and still others put together puzzles in the bedroom. With toddlers, especially this sort of "spreading out" over several rooms can greatly reduce the conflict over toys that otherwise arises. Although it is possible to find regimentation if the day care mother is inclined to be that way, the informality of the home and the small group really work against regimentation.

Then, too, the day care home provides real life encounters with the neighborhood. The family day caregiver takes the children to the bank, the post office, the grocery store -- not for a field trip, but because it is necessary for the caregiver to go. Repairmen, deliverymen (or women) come to the home because it is necessary to make repairs or deliver goods. This is a very realistic way for children to learn what neighborhood resources are all about.

Of course, these educational advantages of family day care multiply when the day care mother is "turned on" to all the powerful learning opportunities that the home environment offers and know how to "turn on" babies and toddlers to these opportunities, too.

The home environment of family day care also makes it easier for some parents to keep informed about the child's activities during the day. Many

parents see the day care home as offering the same kinds of familiar experiences that they themselves would offer if they were home. They understand what the daily routine of a household is like, and so they feel attuned to the child's daily experience. Many parents feel better acquainted with the child's day care experience in a home than they would if the child went to a center with a highly polished curriculum.

In part, this feeling of familiarity derives also from the kind of relationship between parent and caregiver that is encouraged by the home environment. Opportunities for informal communications are readily available, of course, since the caregiver is the one who opens the door, both at morning and at night. Some family day care mothers, particularly when they are close neighbors, invite parents in for morning or afternoon coffee and discuss the child then. In addition, many parents and family day care mothers feel free to call one another at home, nights and weekends to discuss the child care arrangement -- freer than in a parent-teacher situation, where the parent usually doesn't even know the teacher's home phone number. And undeniably, the fact that the caregiver is not perceived as a formal "Teacher" with a capital T, but (usually) another parent or a grandparent, leading a life similar to one's own, tends to make it much easier for parent and caregiver to talk to one another.

The small size of the group cared for in a day care home also has advantages. In the group of no more than five or six children, for example, mixed aged grouping can work very well. There is a special opportunity for social play among children of quite different ages. Toddlers can (and do) develop intense attachments to the older children in the home and learn much from them. An older child might be the protected "baby" of his family, in his own house -- but the protective big brother in a family day care home. The fact that children of all ages can be cared for in one small group makes it possible for siblings to be placed together, except when the number of children in a day care home almost reaches the legal limit. It should be said, also, that many day care homes understandably prefer not to care for infants and older children together, since infants often nap while older children are up, and then wake while preschoolers nap, making it very difficult for the day care mother to get out of the house with the children.

The small group centered around one caregiver also makes it possible for the infants and toddlers in a day care home to form attachments to all the people in that home. In a day care center, babies will select out from the larger group a smaller number of people to whom they get attached. But family day care offers the child that special sense of close togetherness that is commonly found in big families.

The small group offers measured amounts of stimulation. Overstimulation is rarely a problem in family day care. Rather, the day care home can offer just the right rhythm for children under three and with built-in escape hatches besides -- there's always a cosy corner behind the easy chair or another room to migrate to when one want to be alone.

Finally, with regard to continuity of care, day care homes which permit children to come with minor illnesses avoid that week-by-week disruption of care so common in winter months, when colds are frequent. Some family day care mothers, however, anxious about the health of their own children, are very strict in their rules about illness and day care.

As with other child care arrangements, however, there are disadvantages also to family day care, chiefly that it has difficulty providing continuity of care, safety of the environment and visible, supported mechanisms for parent control. Several new developments in family day care, including informal organizations of day care mothers and family day care systems (or networks of homes administered by a central day care agency) have emerged to deal with some of these disadvantages.

The high turnover rate among day care mothers threatens continuity of care for infants. The day care mother in Pasadena, California, averages between $75 and $100 for a fifty-hour week, before paying expenses for food, toys, and other items needed for the children in her care.[18] She is also often isolated in her own home, away from other adults. When this is the case, women are unlikely to stick with this job for very long. While the turnover rate can be high in a day care center also, the child is not as dependent on the one adult as he is in family day care. When the family day caregiver quits, the child must be moved to an entirely different home with a new caregiver. Moreover, when a family day caregiver goes on vacation or even gets sick, the children in her care will usually have to be placed in another home with a different caregiver. This means not only an unfamiliar person but an unfamiliar environment as well.

It is my impression that the turnover rate in family day care is less when the day care home is established in a real neighborhood, where people know each other and help each other out. In neighborhood family day care, the caregiver feels less isolated. Indeed, in some communities, the neighborhood family day care mother is identified and respected as someone very important to that community. In neighborhoods like these, day care mothers, whether they belong to a day care system or not, get together often with children in tow during the day, independently in the evenings. In good weather, they meet each other in parks; in bad weather, several day care mothers might arrange to bring their children and meet in a room in a nearby church, community center or part-day nursery school. If affiliated with a day care organization, they might get together for inservice training or planning sessions. They help each other look after the children. They give each other ideas for play materials, recipes and safety devices. This sharing of the job makes it a lot more enjoyable, and day care mothers working with this sort of community support tend to stay with the job longer. Also, in a very practical way, this kind of close association among day care mothers often means that when a child's caregiver is sick or on vacation, another day care mother familiar to the child will probably be willing to offer the needed temporary care.

Besides striving to promote mutual help among day care mothers, day care systems add other ways to reduce the isolation of day care homes. In bad weather or when sleeping schedules conflict, it is difficult to get to the outside with four or five small children (as in a high-rise apartment). The caregiver may not be able to get out of her home at all. Consequently, she spends ten or eleven hours a day without any adult company. A day care system can train substitute day care mothers and assign them to day care homes as aides when they are not needed to substitute. Each aide/substitute should be assigned to five homes and visit each home for a regular day of the week, so they can get to know the children. Then if a substitute is needed in any of those five homes, someone familiar to the children can step in. Or, some systems place two caregivers in the same home caring for a group of

eight or nine children. Placing student teachers or volunteers in day care homes also helps and provides the day care mother with a link to available educational resources and sometimes an extra source of play materials. Any links to educational institutions should be encouraged as antidotes to the "dead end" nature of the job. That lack of future also contributes to the turnover rate. College training (adapted to family day care) will help improve the skills of the caregiver and her enjoyment of her work; and it will give a career ladder direction to the work.

Finally, day care systems must make sure that caregivers receive the consultation through a personal visit at least once a week and by telephone more often, from early childhood educators, social workers and medical personnel that constitutes one of the chief advantages of a family day care system. These special supports will help reduce the turnover rate, making family day care more stable and better able to provide continuity of care. In the meantime, since the day care system is administered generally under policies designed to maximize continuity of care, the parent can inquire about these policies: what the caregivers are paid, what provisions are made when the caregiver is sick or away, what happens to the children if the caregiver leaves the job, how many times a month consultants and/or supervisors visit day care homes, how often do day care mothers get together, the average length of stay on the job for a caregiver.

With regard to safety of the environment, family day care homes, simply because they are homes, have difficulties. Too many homes are littered with safety hazards -- cleaning fluids stored in low cabinets, uncovered outlets, medicines within easy reach. Many of us have had the frightening experience, even when our homes are safe, of finding our toddlers in extremely dangerous predicaments. These experiences condition parents to be quite anxious when leaving a child in any out-of-home environment. But a private home permits less open inspection by parents. For example, a parent using a day care home would not feel free to ask to see the bathroom. But that same parent might very well be at work worrying about where the razors or the baby aspirin are kept in that bathroom. This anxiety is compounded when the topic of safety is undiscussed, as sometimes happens because the parent is afraid of offending the day care mother. Remembering not only their rights but their responsibilities towards their children, however, parents can and should feel free to ask any caregiver, even someone giving care in her own home, about her safety habits -- and to ask that an unsafe condition be changed. It really helps when the family day care mother takes the initiative, conducting a "tour" of her home for the new parent, pointing out what she does to insure safety in the same way she explains what she does about a nap or discipline. Perhaps a written list of safety practices used by the caregiver could function as a basis for discussion. For people who don't customarily use "lists", a thorough discussion can suffice. Often, in a day care system, parents will feel freer to approach one of the administrators or consultants to the child's day care home, asking them to explain what the safety practices are. This is fine, especially in the beginning stages when parent and caregiver may feel uneasy with each other; but direct conversation between parent and caregiver can also be encouraged. Finally, one of the distinct advantages of a day care system (as compared to an independent unlicensed day care home) is that parents know the caregivers have all had their homes inspected for safety by licensing officials. Furthermore, caregivers receive initial and ongoing support for the demanding but necessary task of daily "child-proofing" of the home environment.

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Besides safety, there are other potential problems when one is dealing with a home environment. An urban home is less likely to offer lots of open space for vigorous activity. If there is no readily available play yard, this lack of space for active play can be a real problem. This is a problem that urban parents have fonfronted for years, however, and a parent can ask (and offer suggestions about) provisions for active play. indoors. A family day care system or organization can design workshops in which day care mothers share ideas for ways to provide for active play despite the restrictions of apartment living.

Also with regard to homes, there is less likely to be "messy" play than in environments designed for quick and easy clean-up. This can be a major or minor disadvantage to parents. Some parents even may consider it an advantage!

A more serious difficulty with the home environment is how it affects parent-caregiver relations. The private nature of the home, closed to the public eye, creates some of the same insecurities that parents feel about the in-home caregiver. An independent family day care home has no third-party assurance that certain standards of care will always be met. To minimize this disadvantage, parents can use the ideas suggested in the discussion on in-home caregiver -- searching for a familiar neighbor, careful interviewing of potential day care mothers, checking of child care references, observation of the child for the first day or two in the day care home, etc. Family day care systems, with a program of at least weekly supervision visits and daily supportive contacts, can greatly help allay some of these parental anxieties.

Nevertheless, even the family day care home in a system will still have a special set of problems with regard to parents. Like any other adult, the caregiver is usually inclined to regard her home as the place for her autonomous existence. This can strain the parent-caregiver relationship. It is one thing for the parent to criticize the management of a day care center and quite another a day care home -- and yet the management of both affects the child's well- being. The relationship is further complicated by the fact that many caregivers in this particular field are also mothers. As mothers, they are vulnerable to the interpretation that a parent's objection to a particular child care technique is a personal criticism of the way the caregiver is raising (or has raised) her own children. This sensitivity goes both ways, of course. Some parents, especially when they are still developing strong attachments to their infants, feel rather threatened by all this emphasis on "mother" and "family." This plus the fact that parent-caregiver interaction usually takes place without the support of a third person (program director, consultant, etc.) who could help to objectify the situation, makes the parent-caregiver relationship marshy ground indeed.

Family day care needs to reexamine this problem. I think it would help if everyone involved with family day care -- parents, caregivers, day care system consultants -- thought of the day care home or perhaps several rooms of the home as an "open home" -- an environment that is both public and private. Perhaps Maria Montessori's idea of the "socialization of the home" -- neighborhood places that are extensions of the home, extensions that exist for the benefit of the neighborhood -- would be helpful here. In addition, the role of the family day caregiver must be much more carefully defined by all, without losing the individual style which each

person brings to the job. I think a new title is needed for the family day caregiver, one that would threaten parents less and more clearly describe all the things that someone caring for children in her own home does.

Communication problems between parents and caregivers are more quickly resolved when the day care system has hired a coordinator who can act as objective third party. Also, besides individual talks between caregiver and parent, all the parents using a day care home could sit down frequently with the day care mother and, as a group, discuss their goals for the children in this day care home -- their concerns, the objections, etc. Parents considering family day care within a system would find it useful to think out carefully what they want in a day care home and to visit a home several times with the child, so they know both what they value and what is likely to happen in a day care home. Some systems or referral centers send parents out to look at three or four day care homes with a copy of "Do You Need Day Care?" This helps the parent to clarify in his/her mind what is important in a day care home to that parent. Also, the day care system could give parents a copy of the job descriptions of the family day caregivers (as well as some written guidelines detailing parents' responsibilities). These could form the basis for a more open "contract" between parent and caregiver and for a fruitful development of trust, by helping them establish exactly what they will expect from one another.

Besides the issues of autonomy of the home and the role of the caregiver, there are others which may muddy the parent-caregiver relationship. One is the sensitivie area of people's deep-seated feelings about appropriate sex roles. Many mothers feel doubly guilty leaving their children with another mother. In a culture that emphasizes the idea of mother-at-home, the working mother is vulnerable to the feeling that the family day caregiver is "better," "more of a woman," etc. On the other side of the fence, the family day caregiver, especially when she has younger children herself, may secretly feel it is not right for a mother to leave her infants. Or she may quietly envy the working parent, who gets to go out and lead a more "glamorous" life every day. These sorts of dynamics can also occur in the other child care arrangements, but in my experience, the environment of another woman's home is particularly conducive to these conflicts. Day care systems have an obligation, I think, to screen out people who express dismay over working parents or "feel sorry " for their infants. Or day care systems can work carefully with caregivers and parents to help them deepen their understanding of the ways in which working mothers are fulfilling their responsibilities to their infants. Parents, in turn, need to see the family day caregiver as a "working mother" also and take great care not to exploit her. Frequent, honest communication will help to bring some of these complicated feelings out in the open, where they can be effectively dealt with.

Family day care is also a child care arrangement with great potential for offering warm, comfortable care. But it needs supports. And the fashioning of these supports will take time, energy and day care's most urgent need -- money.

THE PLAYGROUP

A child care arrangement that is a cross between group care and home care is the playgroup. Like exchange babysitting, however, the playgroup is only feasible when parents work part-time, whether that means for part of the day or a few days a week. Each parent is required to take a turn as caregiver for the playgroup, so this arrangement doesn't meet the needs of parents employed or studying full-time. For the parent who is at work or at school part-time, however, the playgroup offers the advantages of both group care (continuity of care, greater parent control) with the advantages of home day care (the familiar home environment, small group size) with few of the disadvantages of either. And playgroups have a singular advantage: their low cost to parents.

Playgroups vary in size anywhere from three up to about ten children. A small group usually meets in a home under the supervision of parents in rotation, with all of the homes and parents taking turns. Sometimes the parents, chipping in to contribute a salary, then hire a teacher (especially when there is more than five or six children). The teacher will be there for every session of the playgroup, with one or two parents to help out. Either arrangement contributes to the continuity of care for children under three. In the small group, the children are usually cared for by close friends of the parents, who they see in other (sometimes everyday) contexts, the way children in extended families might see aunts or uncles. For the larger group, since two or three different adults will be needed for each session, the hiring of a caregiver who can be a stable continuous figure is advisable -- and relatively inexpensive. If ten parents, for example, pay 50¢ an hour, there will be enough to pay a caregiver $4.00 an hour and buy the extra equipment that will be needed for a larger group. A stable environment, too, works well for the larger group who might be confused by rotating through a number of different homes. A large home, a room in a church or synagogue, community center, local college or even public school, unless obtained for free, will add on somewhat to the cost; but these institutions often look favorably on playgroups.

Although from the viewpoint of developmental theory it might seem odd for infants and toddlers to be able to adjust to several different homes, my observations tell me that there is very little problem, as long as the adults are familiar and the change in homes is not too many. Some playgroups rotate their sessions one week at this house, another week at that house, instead of rotating on a daily basis.

The rotation of turns among parents in the care of children has distinct benefits. When two parents take turns caring for the children together, trust between the parent/caregiver is likely to build as parents have a chance to observe each other and see how each parent handles the group of children. And especially with toddlers, parents have the opportunity to see that it's not only their toddler who throws tantrums, etc. So many of the joys and sorrows of that under-three period come into focus as developmental necessities, rather than (as many parents secretly fear) parent-created problems.

Nearly all playgroups, organized as they are by parents, deeply involve parents in every aspect of the operation of the playgroup, from helping out with the care of the children to decision-making about general policies. The part-time working parents of playgroups often get involved in the playgroups, or with other parents, on their days "off" from work or school. In this way

playgroups offer a very positive support, not only to isolated parents, but to fragmented communities too, bringing the residents of a community into closer contact with one another. The neighborhood supermarket or public library or local pediatrician's office, for example, is likely to have cards posted by parents announcing their desire to organize or join a playgroup. These little cards become important points of contact, drawing parents out of their lonely homes into the crisscross patterns of relationships with other families that form the basis of a neighborhood.

In terms of the playgroup, "after hours" involvement of the parents also helps develop trust between parent/caregivers. For the children, playing with each other when the playgroup is not in session can be both a relief from the boredom of parent-child all day intereaction and a boost to their developing capacity for friendship as well.

As in neighborhood family day care, the home environment has both advantages (familiarity, interest and variation, "spread-out" space) and disadvantages (possible safety hazards, limitation of space).

Furthermore, the small group in a playgroup allows for the measured stimulation, focused adult attention and "feeling of family" that develops in a day care home.

And as in quality group care, the basic design of the playgroup, with its understanding that all the parents involved must come together and decide what they want out of the playgroup, etc., allows for maximum parent control.

Finally, a very attractive advantage of the playgroup is its low cost. When the group is small and parents simply take turns, there is no cost at all for the child care. Even when the group is large and a steady caregiver is hired, as long as parents help out as caregivers, the cost, as we have seen, is minimal.

The disadvantages of playgroups? They are very similar to the disadvantages of exchange babysitting. When the helping parent turn comes as caregiver, he/she is likely to see her previously playful child become a clinging, whining or aggressive child -- jealousy. This doesn't happen to all children, but for the child who simply cannot share any part of his parent with other children, playgroups may be more painful than pleasant. For the parents, friendships can make evaluation of the playgroup experience quite difficult.

MINI-CENTER: THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS

Let me do some dreaming now of what I would consider the ideal arrangement for infant child care. It is the mini-center. There are ten to twelve children aged from a few months to three years in the center. There are three adults who work the morning shift (7:00 to 3:00) and three adults who work the afternoon shift (11:00 to 6:00), a four hour period when both shifts are on duty together and can share information about the children, plan the program, etc. "Attachment grouping" is ultilized. There are four children assigned to one caregiver in the morning, and the same four to another caregiver in the afternoon. This staff is supplemented by students and volunteers. The mini-center is housed in a renovated apartment in a project, the bottom floor of a house, or even a large double width mobile home. The renovations have been done so as to preserve those features of a home environment that appeal to infants, but at the same time remove all safety hazards. Repairmen, postmen, delivery people come to the mini-center to perform essential services in full view of the children, and frequent trips are made in groups of four to neighboring shops to purchase essential items. Provisions for one-way observation for parents have been made. There is plenty of light, plenty of space for active play, and a carefully controlled environment that offers just the right amount of stimulation for each child.

The outdoors is immediately accessible. The staff, the children and their families live in the immediate neighborhood and think of the mini-center as an extension of their own homes. Parents may use the center on weekends as a sort of indoor "tot lot." Because the center has several rooms, the children don't feel hemmed in and naptime can take place in separate quarters, away from the play area. Meals are prepared in the center's kitchen from meats, fresh fruits and vegetables and with occasional help from a two year old. In consultation with a pediatrician, caregivers and parents together develop their own policy about illness and special arrangments are made, either within or outside the center, for the care of sick children.

Parents and caregivers together decide what happens to the children during the day. Parent working part-time help out in the mini-center during the day. In addition to individual conferences, there are two meetings a month at a time convenient for parents: one to decide policy and one to discuss children and the problems of child-rearing. Teachers are hired on the basis of demonstrated competency with small children. They are well paid and many varied opportunities for their further education are available to them. The mini-center is situated adjacent to or very near a nursery school or day care center for older children, and provisions are made for mixing the two age groups. Parents are fully involved in the center program. Finally, the cost to parents: On a sliding scale, up to but no more than $20 a week. The hard-earned taxes of the parents are used by the government to pay the rest and thus improve the lives of our own children, instead of being used to bomb and kill other people's children.

Parents are hard pressed these days to provide well for their children while they are away at work or school. Conspicuous by its absence in this article is much discussion about the grandmother or aunt who cares for the child during the day. That is because I know of only one person who uses this arrangement. This may be because I just happen to know a population that

is highly mobile and living many miles away from their families. But the increasing mobility of our society dictates that the pressures of making good child care arrangements will visit more and more of us each year. I hope that this paper, together with the responses it will generate, will be helpful in reducing some of those pressures. But most of all, I hope it points to a direction we must take if our infants and toddlers are going to get the care they deserve, a direction of careful observation, thoughtful reflection, honest communication and cheerful but determined work.

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NOTES

1. Women's Bureau, Department of Labor.

2. Some of these arguments can be found in: William Shannon, "A Radical, Direct, Simple Utopian Alternative to Day Care Centers," New York Times Magazine, April 30, 1972; and Belle Evans and George Siai, Day Care for Infants. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972 ($6.95 hardback, $3.95 softback); and The Care and Education of Young Children. Washington, D.C.: Day Care and Child Development Council of America reprint, 1973 ($.75); see pages 4-23 to 4-31, "Notes on Group Programs for Infants and Toddlers."

3. Dorothy Huntington, et al., Day Care: Serving Infants. Washington, D.C.: Day Care and Child Development Council reprint, 1973. ($.75). An inexpensive and useful investment for a parent using infant care.

4. I am going to use the word caregiver in this paper because people have different names for the person who takes care of children -- teacher, family day care mother, babysitter, etc., and I want to avoid confusion. As someone who has worked in day care, I like to be called caregiver, but I know many others who feel that this name suggests someone who gives day care is "second-class" as compared to a nursery school teacher. This certainly is not intended here.

5. Robert Haggerty, "Childhood Accidents" in Haggerty and Green, Ambulatory Pediatrics, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company, 1968, pp. 813-814.

6. Write Health Education, Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston, Mass. They also have even more detailed pamphlets on the prevention of childhood poisoning.

7. Some samples of job descriptions for day care staff can be found in Day Care: Administration, a manual available from the Day Care and Child Development Council for $1.25; also some descriptions in Evans and Siai, Day Care for Infants, mentioned above.

8. Sally Provence and Rose Lipton, Infants in Institutions. New York: International University Press, 1962; and Rene Spitz, "Hospitalism," The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, Vol. I, New York: International University Press, 1945.

9. Evidence to the contrary can be found in Bettye Caldwell, "Infant Day Care and Attachment," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1970, 40:3, pp. 367-412; Caldwell, "What Research Teaches Us About Day Care For Children Under the Age of Three," ibid; and Bernard Asbell, "Helping Children to Grow Up Smart," Redbook, July, 1970. But I think the best evidence about the effects of infant day care can be gathered by going to visit infant day care centers or family day care homes, or by talking to parents who have used day care for their own infants.

10. Ann DeHuff Peters, "Health Support in Day Care," in Day Care: Resources for Decisions, edited by Edith H. Grotberg. Washington, D.C.: Day Care and Child Development Council reprint, 1972. ($4.00)

11. Selecting and Instructing Babysitters, a pamphlet free from Mead Johnson and Company, Evansville, Indiana. Pediatricians' offices and pediatric clinics might also have copies of this pamphlet.

12. Ann De Huff Peters, op. cit.

13. Elizabeth Prescott and Ecliabeth Jones, Day Care as a Child-Rearing Environment, Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1972. Prescott and Jones found that centers for 30 to 60 children offered the highest quality of care.

14. Herbert Birch,"Malnutrition and Early Development," in Day Care: Resources for Decisions, op. cit.

15. See testimony of Ms. Mary P. Rowe before the Senate Finance Committee, an appendix to Day Care Survey 1970, Washington, D.C.: Day Care and Child Development Council, 1972 ($1.50).

16. "Some Ways of Distinguishing a Good School or Center for Young Children," free if you send a stamped self-addressed #10 envelope to: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

17. Personal communication from Ms. Kate Bulls Lafayette, former director of the KLH Child Development Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

18. June Sale and Yolanda Torres, I'm Not Just a Babysitter, Washington, D.C.: Day Care and Child Development Council of America reprint, 1972 ($3.00).

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